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ABSTRACT

A program to provide New York City public school personnel with intensive language training, so they could serve in license-shortage areas, is evaluated. The program provided access to 6-week language immersion courses at four higher education institutions to improve oral and written language skills. Those eligible were teachers, guidance counselors, education evaluators, school social workers, school psychologists, and other employees currently serving in a non-supervisory pedagogical position who had, at the outset, an intermediate level of second language proficiency. In exchange for tuition assistance, on successful completion of the language courses, participants were required to serve for a minimum of two years in a bilingual education position in an area of employee shortage. Evaluation of the program is described in this report. The program was found successful in increasing the number of non-supervisory pedagogical employees in bilingual positions: 89 percent of follow-up survey respondents obtained a bilingual position, and 95 percent obtained bilingual certification. Respondents rated most program aspects highly. Recommendations include: continuation of the program; modification of language laboratory and cultural activities to prepare graduates better for bilingual positions; and provision of training geared to teacher specialization. Eleven tables of study data are appended. (MSE)

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OER Report

THE 1993 FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF THE 1991-1992 FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM (REVISED)

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THE 1993 FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF THE 1991-1992 FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM (REVISED)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Foreign Language Immersion Program (FLIP) was established in 1987 to give non-supervisory pedagogical employees of the Board of Education of the City of New York an opportunity to serve in license-shortage-areas by improving their conversational and written skills in a second language through an intensive six-week course.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Applicants must be presently employed in the New York City public school system in a non-supervisory pedagogical license or position (e.g. teacher, guidance counselor, education evaluator, school social worker, school psychologist etc.). Prospective participants must possess an intermediate level of proficiency (both written and oral) in the second language. Level of proficiency is determined by appropriate testing prior to admission to the program. Participants attend class for six consecutive weeks, beginning in July and ending in August. Upon successfully completing the program and passing the ancillary examination, participants are required to serve in a bilingual position for a minimum of two years. In exchange for tuition assistance, each candidate must sign a contract agreeing to provide a minimum of two years of service in bilingual education.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

During the spring of 1993, evaluators from the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R.) met with the Bureau of Incentive and Specialized Recruitment programs personnel to determine the scope of evaluations and design a program-specific questionnaire. The questionnaire instrument was mailed in the spring of 1993 to program graduates. Of the 61 questionnaires sent, 19 (31 percent) were returned. O.E.R. prepared this evaluation report based on these data.

PROGRAM FINDINGS

The program was successful in increasing the number of non-supervisory pedagogical employees in bilingual positions in license-shortage-areas:

- 89 percent (17) of the respondents obtained a bilingual position;
- 95 percent (18) of the respondents obtained bilingual certification;

- 58 percent of the respondents (11) were employed on a bilingual line, including four elementary school teachers, three educational evaluators, and two social workers; and

- 32 percent of the respondents (6) were employed in a bilingual position but were not working on a bilingual line, including two social workers, two guidance counselors, a speech therapist, and an elementary school teacher.

Respondents rated most of the program's aspects highly, including overall preparation for working in a bilingual position. However, graduates thought FLIP could be improved by changing the program length/intensity and making the application process easier.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Graduates were generally pleased with their program experiences and optimistic about being re-hired in their current position in their current school next year. However, respondents said that some program aspects, such as the language lab and cultural activities, were not useful.

In light of these findings O.E.R. recommends that:

- the Bureau of Incentive and Specialized Recruitment Programs continue the Foreign Language Immersion Program;

- program administrators modify program aspects such as the language lab and cultural activities in order to better prepare graduates for working in a bilingual position; and

- program administrators provide training that is geared to teacher specialization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was produced by the Research Unit of the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R.) -- formerly the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. The design of the study and the report's development were supervised by Mabel Payne. Thanks go to: Ira Brandenburg for questionnaire design; Sangeetha Purushothaman and Leah Weich for coordinating data collection and interpretation; James Reeves II and Vadim Markhasin for data tabulation; and Renee Moseley for word processing.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

The Foreign Language Immersion Program (FLIP) was established in 1987 to provide non-supervisory pedagogical employees of the Board of Education (BOE) of the City of New York an opportunity to serve in license-shortage-areas by improving their conversational and written skills in a second language through an intensive six-week course.* In addition, the program includes a cultural component designed to enhance participants' awareness of and sensitivity to other cultural groups.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must be presently employed by the BOE in a non-supervisory pedagogical position (e.g., teacher, guidance counselor, educational evaluator, school social worker, school psychologist, etc.). Prospective participants must possess an intermediate level of proficiency (both written and oral) in the second language. Level of proficiency is determined by appropriate testing prior to admission to the program. In addition, applicants have to show proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Participants may choose to register at any of the following universities: Baruch College, City College of New York, Molloy College, or the State University of New York at New Paltz. They

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*Non-supervisory pedagogical employees include: teachers, guidance counselors, educational evaluators, school social workers, and school psychologists.

attend classes for six consecutive weeks, beginning in July and ending in August.

In exchange for tuition assistance, the Bureau of Incentive and Specialized Recruitment requires each candidate to sign a contract that he or she will serve in a bilingual position for a minimum of two years after successfully completing the program and passing the ancillary examination. The Bureau makes efforts to place each participant in their current school/district if a bilingual need exists. If *bona fide* vacancies do not exist Bureau administrators will transfer the participant to a position in another school/district where a need exists in the beginning of the school year. Participant preferences are taken into consideration in determining in which vacancy the participant will be placed.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This evaluation, conducted by the Office of Educational Research (O.E.R.), was designed to:

- determine the number of participants who successfully completed the program;
- determine the number of participants who passed relevant Board of Education/State Education Department examinations;
- determine the number of participants who, subsequent to successful program completion, held relevant staff or administrative positions with the BOE;
- specify demographic characteristics of program participants, including ethnicity, gender, and related career and educational experiences;
- summarize participants' perceptions of program design and implementation; and

- present program participants' recommendations for program improvement.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

After meeting with Bureau of Incentive and Specialized Recruitment Programs personnel to determine the scope of the evaluation, O.E.R. evaluators sent a program-specific questionnaire to 61 individuals during the spring of 1993. By the end of August 1993, O.E.R. had received a total of 19 questionnaires, yielding a total response rate of 31.1 percent. Of the 19 respondents, 18 joined the program and completed it in the summer of 1991 and one respondent joined in the summer of 1990 and completed the program in the fall of 1991. The data were compiled by O.E.R. during the fall of 1993, and this evaluation report was written on the basis of these data.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

Chapter I of this report details an overview of the programs' goals and objectives. Chapter II presents the findings as they pertain to each of the evaluation objectives. Chapter III offers conclusions and recommendations for the program's improvement.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Fifty-three percent (10) of the 19 respondents to the O.E.R. questionnaire were between 30 and 50 years of age. Eighty-nine percent of the graduates were female and 63 percent were white. Seventy-four percent of the graduates spoke Spanish. Twenty-six percent had an MA degree and another 26 percent had an MS degree. Baruch College had the most trainees enrolled, six, and City College of New York had the least, two. (See Appendix Table 1 for more demographic information.)

SOURCES OF PROGRAM INFORMATION

Of the 17 participants who indicated where they obtained information about the Foreign Language Immersion Program, most found out about the program from a teacher or other Board of Education employee (53 percent) and/or a BOE circular (32 percent). (See Appendix Table 2 for more data.)

PARTICIPANT TRAINING

Participant Assessment of Application Process

When asked to rate the application process, participants used a five point rating scale ranging from 1-5, where 1=very easy and 5=very difficult. Most graduates (58 percent) replied that the application process was easy, i.e.--"2" or less.

When asked how they would improve the application process, participants gave the following recommendations: advertise and begin the program earlier (three graduates), have staff be more

helpful (two graduates), and inform participants of what to expect in an interview (one respondent).

Participant Assessment of Program Administration

Participants assessed how well the FLIP program was administered by using a five point scale, where 5=excellent and 1=poor. The majority of participants (84 percent) rated program administration highly, i.e.--"4" or better.

When asked what improvements they would make in program administration, two graduates recommended that program managers increase the time spent on test preparation for the bilingual exam, and one said that the BOE staff should be up to par with the Baruch staff.

BILINGUAL CERTIFICATION EXPERIENCE

After completing the FLIP, 89 percent (17) of the participants passed the language proficiency exam the first time they took it. Of the two graduates who did not pass the language proficiency exam the first time, one took a remedial course and passed the exam the second time. Thus, 95 percent (18) of the respondents obtained their bilingual certification.

GRADUATES' EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employment Locations

The majority (67 percent) of graduates were working in a community school district. (See Appendix Table 3 for more data.)

Position Types Before and After Program Participation

Prior to participation in FLIP, eight (42 percent) of the graduates were working as a teacher, while three (16 percent)

were working as a school social worker and another three (16 percent) were working as a guidance counselor. (See Table 4 for more data.) After participating in FLIP, 17 (89 percent) of the graduates were working in a bilingual position.

O.E.R.'s analysis of these graduates' positions indicated that 11 (58 percent) held a position on a bilingual line (See Appendix Table 5 for more data), while the remaining six were working in a bilingual position that was not on a bilingual line. Four of the graduates working on a bilingual line were elementary school teachers, three were educational evaluators, and two were social workers. (See Appendix Table 5 for more data.)

Job Sources

The 17 graduates working in a bilingual position indicated the ways by which they found out about their current placement. Seven graduates (41 percent) found out about their job as a result of working in the same school in another capacity, three learned of their present position from the Board of Education, two had a contact in their present school, and another two learned of the position from their district office. (See Appendix Table 6 for more data.)

Nature of Contact with Spanish/Haitian Creole-speaking Population

In order to determine the extent to which program graduates utilized their bilingual ability O.E.R. asked them to describe the nature of their contact, if any, with Spanish or Haitian Creole-speaking students and/or parents. Of the six graduates employed in a bilingual position who responded to this question,

two reported contacts with Spanish or Haitian Creole-speaking students or parents at Committee on Special Education review meetings, two had contacts at parent education workshops, and one each reported contacts while providing translation service for incoming students, and in telephone conversations with parents. (See Appendix Table 7 for more data.)

BILINGUAL POSITION EXPECTATIONS

Graduates were asked to indicate their expectation about being re-hired in their current school in their current position next year. Of the seventeen graduates who obtained bilingual positions, 100 percent expected to be rehired next year in the same position and in the same school.

GRADUATES' PROGRAM AND SERVICE OBLIGATION POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Bilingual Examination Preparation

Graduates were asked to rate FLIP in its overall preparation for the Ancillary Bilingual Examination by using a rating scale of 1-5, where 5=very well and 1=poorly. In addition, graduates were asked to assess the usefulness of specific program features in preparation for the exam. Again, they used a rating scale of 1-5, where 5=very useful and 1=not useful in order to rate the program features. (See Appendix Table 8 for the program features.) While the majority of graduates rated the program as a whole, and most program features, highly--i.e., "4" or better --they did not find the cultural activities useful (an average rating of 2.1).

Position Preparation

Graduates were asked to give a rating on FLIP's usefulness in preparing them for working in a bilingual position. They rated its overall usefulness highly. While the majority of graduates also rated most program features highly--i.e., "4" or better on a 5 point scale--they did not find the Language laboratory useful (an average rating of 3). (See Appendix Table 9 for more data.)

Overall Program Assessment

When asked to state the most useful aspects of the program, graduates cited free conversation (four graduates), in-class drills (two graduates), interaction with other classmates (two graduates), and course materials (two graduates). Aspects that graduates thought were not useful included hostile administrators, speaking Spanish during lunch, and cultural activities.

Graduates said that the program could be improved by providing field trips and more cultural activities (16 percent), and by gearing the training to teachers' specializations (11 percent). (Please see Appendix Table 10 for more participant suggestions.)

Assessment of Service Obligation Policy

Using a rating scale of 1-5, where 5=very fair and 1=very unfair, graduates felt overall that the service obligation was more than fair (an average rating of 4.4).

Only two graduates responded to the questionnaire item about how to improve the service obligation policy, and they contra-

dicted one another; one said to shorten the time of service obligation, and the other said to lengthen the time of the service obligation.

Graduates' main recommendations to improve FLIP were to extend the program/make it more intensive, and provide review courses to maintain achieved skill levels. (Please see Appendix Table 11 for overall recommendations for improving FLIP.)

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

FLIP was designed to give teachers, guidance counselors, educational evaluators, school social workers, and school psychologists of the Board of Education of the City of New York an opportunity to serve in bilingual positions by improving their conversational and written skills in a second language, and enhancing their awareness of and sensitivity to other cultural groups. Based on a review of program documents, and participant surveys, O.E.R. found that the program was successful in increasing the pool of qualified candidates--a majority of the 19 graduates from the program who responded to O.E.R.'s questionnaire indicated that they successfully obtained a bilingual position in the Board of Education of the City of New York, upon graduation, and 18 of these respondents were qualified to fill these bilingual positions.

Many participants had a favorable opinion of the program, rating its help in preparing them for working in a bilingual position highly. However, participants did not find the language laboratory or cultural activities aspects of the program useful. Suggestions for improvement included changing the program length/ intensity, and making the application process easier.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of these findings O.E.R. recommends that:

- the Bureau of Incentive and Specialized Recruitment Programs continue the Foreign Language Immersion Program;

- program administrators modify program aspects such as the language lab and cultural activities in order to better prepare graduates for working in a bilingual position; and
- program administrators provide training that is geared to teachers' specializations.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
OF 1991-92 FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

ITEM	TOTAL GRADUATES	
	N	%
Age Range		
20-30	3	16
31-40	6	32
41-50	4	21
50+	6	32
Gender		
Male	2	11
Female	17	89
Ethnicity		
White	12	63
Latino	4	21
African-American	2	11
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	5
Languages Spoken		
English	17	89
Spanish	14	74
French	3	16
Haitian-Creole	2	11
Highest Educational Degree		
BA	3	16
MA	5	26
MS	5	26
MEd	1	5
MSW	3	16
Ph.D	1	5
No Response	1	5
Program site attended		
Baruch College	6	32
New Paltz (SUNY)	5	26
Molloy College	4	21
City College of New York	2	11
No Response	2	11

* Percentages in this table are based on the 19 total respondents to O.E.R.'s questionnaire.

- Most of the respondents were between 30 and 50 years old, female, white, and English or Spanish-speaking. About 85 percent had at least a Masters' degree.

TABLE 2

GRADUATES SOURCES OF INFORMATION
ABOUT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

SOURCES OF INFORMATION	N	%
A teacher or B.O.E. employee	10	53
The Board of Education Offices or circulars/brochures issued by the B.O.E.	6	32
Other Staff Employed by the B.O.E.	2	11
United Federation of Teachers	2	11
Baruch College	1	5
No Response	2	11

- Percentages in this table are based on the 19 completed O.E.R. questionnaires. Respondents provided multiple responses to this question; hence, percentages exceed 100 percent.
- Most graduates found out about the program from a teacher or other BOE employee (53 percent) or a BOE circular (32 percent).

TABLE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF GRADUATES' WORK LOCATIONS		
DISTRICT CURRENTLY WORKING IN	TOTAL GRADUATES N	%
2	1	05
11	1	05
12	1	05
14	1	05
17	1	05
25	3	16
27	4	21
30	1	05
78	3	16
No Response	3	16

* Table percentages are based on the 19 respondents to O.E.R.'s questionnaire.

- The majority (67 percent) of the graduates were working in a community school district.

TABLE 4

GRADUATES' POSITION TITLES BEFORE PARTICIPATION IN THE FLIP PROGRAM

PRIOR POSITION TITLE	N	%*
Teacher	8	42
Guidance Counselor	3	16
School Social Worker	3	16
Educational Evaluator	2	11
Psychologist	1	5
Speech Therapist	1	5
No Response	1	5

* Percentages in this table are based on the 19 total respondents to O.E.R.'s questionnaire.

- Prior to participation in FLIP graduates were most frequently (42 percent) working as a teacher.

TABLE 5

GRADUATES' CURRENT POSITION IN THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CATEGORY	N	%*
BILINGUAL POSITION/BILINGUAL LINE		
Elementary School Teacher	4	21
Educational Evaluator	3	16
Social Worker	2	11
Special Education Teacher	1	05
School Psychologist	1	05
BILINGUAL POSITION/NON-BILINGUAL LINE		
Social Worker	2	11
Guidance Counselor	2	11
Speech Therapist	1	05
Elementary School Teacher	1	05
NONBILINGUAL POSITION		
Teacher	2	11
TOTAL	19	101

* Percentages in the table are based on the 19 respondents to O.E.R.'s questionnaire, and total more than 100 because of rounding errors.

- After participating in FLIP, 89 percent were working in a bilingual position.

TABLE 6

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENT BILINGUAL POSITIONS

INFORMATION SOURCES	N	%*
Already working at the same school in another capacity	7	41
Board of Education	3	18
District Office	2	12
Contact in a school	2	12
No response	3	18

* Percentages in this table are based on the 17 graduates who said they were employed in bilingual positions.

- Most graduates (41 percent) found out about their job as a result of working in the same school in another capacity.

TABLE 7

NATURE OF CONTACT
WITH SPANISH OR HAITIAN CREOLE-SPEAKING
STUDENTS OR PARENTS

TYPES OF CONTACT	N	%*
Committee on Special Education (C.S.E.) review meetings	2	12
Parent education workshops	2	12
Translation service for incoming students	1	6
Telephone conversations with parents	1	6
No Response	10	58

* Percentages in this table are based on the 17 graduates who said they were employed in bilingual positions.

- The types of contact that graduates most frequently said they had with Spanish or Haitian Creole-speaking students and/ or parents were at C.S.E. review meetings and parent education workshops (24 percent).

TABLE 8*

GRADUATES' RATINGS OF PROGRAM ASPECTS' USEFULNESS IN PREPARING THEM FOR THE ANCILLARY BILINGUAL EXAMINATION

PROGRAM ASPECTS	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN RATING
Classwork	15	1	2	1	0	4.6
Free Conversation	12	5	2	0	0	4.5
Course Materials	12	3	3	1	0	4.4
Language Lab	5	5	3	1	2	3.1
Cultural Activities	0	4	3	3	8	2.1
Overall Program	12	5	1	1	0	4.5

* Graduates rated many aspects using a Likert scale ranging from 1= not useful to 5= very useful.

- While the majority of graduates rated most program features highly--i.e., "4" or better--they did not find the cultural activities useful (an average rating of 2.1).

TABLE 9*

GRADUATES' RATINGS OF PROGRAM ASPECTS' USEFULNESS IN PREPARING THEM TO WORK IN A BILINGUAL POSITION

PROGRAM ASPECTS	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN RATING
Free Conversation	12	4	3	0	0	4.5
Classwork	11	4	3	1	0	4.3
Course Materials	10	4	3	1	1	4.1
Cultural Activities	7	7	4	1	0	4.1
Language Lab	4	6	3	1	2	3.0
Overall Usefulness	7	10	1	0	1	4.2

* Graduates rated program aspects using a Likert scale ranging from 1=not useful to 5=very useful.

- While the majority of graduates rated most program features highly--i.e., "4" or better--they did not find the language laboratory useful (an average rating of 3).

TABLE 10

GRADUATES' SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING SPECIFIC PROGRAM ASPECTS

PROGRAM ASPECTS/SUGGESTIONS	N	%*
Cultural Activities		
More field trips/cultural activities	3	16
Give training at actual sites	1	5
Exposure to bilingual situation with strangers	1	5
No improvements needed	4	21
No answer	10	53
Class Work		
Training should be geared to teacher specialization	2	11
More vocabulary	1	5
More practice for the licensing examination	1	5
Other: "we covered a lot of ground in a month"	1	5
No improvements needed	3	16
No answer	11	58
Course Materials		
Geared more to each discipline	1	5
Would like follow-up course to maintain skills	1	5
More modern stories	1	5
For Haitian Creole, need tapes and dictionary	1	5
No improvements needed	4	21
No answer	11	58
Free Conversation		
Work in specific discipline/on the job training	1	5
More conversation in training	1	5
Follow up conversation groups once training is completed	1	5
No improvements needed	4	21
No answer	12	63
Language Lab		
Audio-tapes of natural speakers	1	5
Include practicing interviews between social workers and parents	1	5
Need tape recorders and earphones	1	5
Allow access to the lab during class times	1	5
No improvements needed	3	16
No answer	8	42

* Percentages in this table are based on the 19 respondents to the O.E.R. questionnaire.

• Graduates' suggestions included providing field trips and more cultural activities (16 percent), and gearing training to teachers' specializations (11 percent).

TABLE 11

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE FLIP

RECOMMENDATIONS	N	%*
Extend program/make it more intensive	3	16
Provide review courses to maintain skill levels	3	16
Make the application process easier	2	11
Make books and other materials more readily available	2	11
Provide more opportunities to practice tutoring Spanish-speaking individuals	1	5
No response	1	5
	9	47

* Percentages in this table are based on the 19 respondents to the O.E.R. questionnaire.

- The main recommendations to improve FLIP were to extend/intensify the program and provide review courses to maintain achieved skill levels, (16 percent of respondents, each).